

# Collective Worship Policy



**Approved/updates by:**

Jude Clements Headteacher

**Last reviewed on:** December 2021

**Date:** February 2022

**Next review due by:** September 2024

*'Together we grow from acorns to oaks'*

Our school vision is,

*'Together we grow from acorns to oaks'*

*They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour' Isaiah 61:3*

**We know that every child is a unique gift and is precious to God. Together, we create the Oakhill family where we are given the space and opportunities to learn, grow and flourish. Our learning and experiences are valued, purposeful and relevant for life now and in the future. We believe our journey together will equip us with the tools to unlock the**

*'Best versions of ourselves'.*

We believe that Collective Worship in a Church school should help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and develop community and understanding of living well together to enable every child and adult to flourish. Our Collective Worship is structured around our six Christian Values of

- Friendship,
- Respect,
- Community,
- Determination,
- Trust, • Kindness.

### **Policy Statement**

Worship is important to the life of school at Oakhill and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and regularly adapted so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. It helps to foster a spirit of community in the school and across year groups.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Oakhill Church School collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and leading people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish. It aims to give both body and spirit time to breathe, offering space and stillness at the end of a hectic and pressured day to be oneself and to sit and reflect.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian (*and other faiths*<sup>1</sup>) calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

## **Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of collective worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at anytime in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, “that it should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”, is not relevant. Worship in Oakhill Church School should be distinctly Christian and reflect Anglican traditions.

The governing body have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

## **The right of withdrawal**

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<sup>1</sup> Collective Worship in a CofE school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian), however there is a responsibility for schools in all contexts to mark, respond and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

<sup>2</sup> “To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God”. William Temple (1881-1894)

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In Oakhill Church School there may be some children whose families are members of another faith, or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, this should be made clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

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On occasions, a parent may make a request for their child to be withdrawn from Collective Worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and head teacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- Such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- That the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the Parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

## **Aims**

Collective worship in Oakhill Church School aims to:

- Have a fundamental place in the life of the school.
- Support pupils and adults in their spiritual growth

- Be the central vehicle by which the school's vision and values are unpacked and explored so that the whole school community is challenged and engaged with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Support pupils in the development of their understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God in Christian belief
- Provide a variety of different opportunities for reflection, understanding of diverse liturgical traditions, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality whilst contributing to the communal journey.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well-known Christian prayers.
- Offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship with the support and shared engagement of the local church community. Pupils will be at the centre of this process taking on increasingly independent roles in planning and leading Church led worships.
- Ensure that materials and themes for worship are carefully selected to make sure pupils understand the work of Christians and the church locally, nationally and globally and how this reflects the teachings of the Bible and the example of Jesus.
- Provide a shared sense of the wonder and awe of creation and the beauty, power and mystery of the world in which we live.

### **Development of the policy and links to other policies and documentation**

This policy was drawn up by staff and governors and is set within the context of being part of the Multi Academy Trust of the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

It is consistent with the aims of our school and takes into account recent legislation, statutory requirements and worship guidelines.

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community

We also ensure that information about collective worship is included in the school prospectus and / or on the school website.

### **How Collective worship is organised**

Our Collective Worship is led by all staff members, our local vicar, other visiting celebrants and the children.

### **Leadership**

- All teaching staff have a role in the leadership of Worship
- Guidance for planning is through the use of 'Roots and Fruits'

### **Planning**

- The ethos committee and staff agreed that "Roots and Fruits" will form the basis of collective worship
- "Roots and Fruits" enable joined-up planning of assemblies to take place
- In conjunction with the local Vicar our planning also reflects key events in the Christian Year
- Our Christian values are reflected in worship through allowing children time to settle and feel a sense of occasion; allowing time for personal reflection and prayer; developing a sense that worship is important
- Through use of "Roots and Fruits" and referencing our school vision and values the children are drawn back to the Bible
- Our worship takes a variety of forms and uses a range and variety of materials including puppets, music, plays, stories, music video clips and focal points
- Through stories and visitors children see examples of those living the faith
- Through the uses of images and artefact the Trinitarian nature of God is explored
- Spiritual growth through prayer, stillness and reflection is nurtured through times of reflection and thinking about the bigger questions of the world

## Organisation and preparation

- Two liturgies are followed to reflect the nature of the worship. These are identified by the terms 'worship' and 'assembly'.

A worship centred on a Christian song and a bible related teaching with opportunity to pray and reflect.

An assembly is a time for communication, learning and/or celebration focused on our values.

**Monday:** Headteacher – Christian Value Focus, following 'Roots and Fruits'

**Tuesday:** Class Worship - Unpacking the message from Monday worship – considering the impact of the message on our everyday lives. Each class has a Class worship book containing personal reflections.

**Wednesday:** Singing Worship – an opportunity to learn new songs for worship

**Thursday:** Bi-weekly Church Worship, led by different classes and supported by Rev. Richard Priestly. Parents welcome to attend

**Friday:** Celebration Worship led by Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

Headteacher awards, Christian Value Awards, Outside achievements and House Points are all celebrated during this time for Nursery to Oak Class. Birthdays are also celebrated.

- Collective worship is at 10:10 each day for 20minutes
- The space is prepared by Year 6 children by organising music for the children to enter the hall, preparing the worship table and lighting the candles at the beginning of the assembly/ worship.
- We recognise the fact that we all need to prepare ourselves well for an act of worship. For worship taking place in the hall or in Church, this preparation begins as we leave the classroom. Children gather and are quiet, they are reminded of what they are about to engage in and children. Before worship begins, everyone sits still and silently; children should be encouraged to use this time to still themselves and to think about what is to take place and prepare themselves for this time.
- Children sit facing the worship table upon which there are three candles representing 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' which provide a focal point for the worship.
- The liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church Year are represented with a cloth both on the hall table and class reflection areas

## Roles and Responsibilities

- The Headteacher and teaching staff lead Collective Worship
- The Ethos Team lead once a term
- Clergy deliver and help plan collective worship
- Children prepare the setting, participate in, and lead Collective Worship

- Children reflect on and monitor Collective Worships
- Parents and carers are invited to participate in church worship every other Thursday
- Visitors are invited to attend worship or, if appropriate, lead worship

### **Staff development and training**

The RE leader regularly attends appropriate Diocesan and MAT training, this is then disseminated to other staff members as appropriate. Appropriate training and opportunities for professional development of the wider RE curriculum for other staff members will be developed both at Hub and Diocesan level.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

- Pupils and teaching staff are involved in the evaluation of worship. Sometimes this is through discussion, sometime through a formal evaluation form
- Evaluation also happens at a more informal level through watching, listening to and engaging with the children in other areas of their learning
- Responding to evaluations and feedback enables us to adjust and strengthen our worship

### **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff and governors, parents and carers and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.